

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action of September 29, 2005. By this Amendment, claims 1-4 and 6-33 are currently in the application.

In the Office Action, claims 11 and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form. By this Amendment, both claims have been written in independent form, including all the limitations of their respective base claims. As such, claims 11 and 23 should be allowable.

The remaining claims were rejected over Mills and Sandford. By the changes to the claims herein, Applicant submits that these references have been overcome. In particular, claim 1 now brings out the structure of the groove in the one end cap, and that it is thinner (sidewall-to-sidewall) than it is deep (inner annular wall surface-to-end wall). This distinguishes over Mills and Sandford, which as identified by the Examiner, include grooves which are designed to receive O-rings for sealing purposes. There is no disclosure or suggestion in these references to provide a groove that is thinner than it is deep. Rather, if anything, the O-ring grooves are shown as being **wider** (sidewall-to-sidewall) than they are deep (wall surface to end wall).

Claim 5 has been canceled as being substantially redundant of current claim 1, and an appropriate change has been made to claim 6.

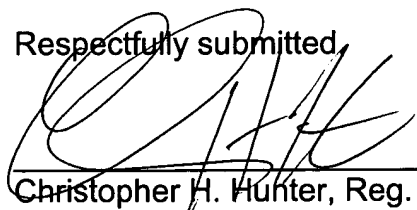
New claims 30 and 32, which are dependent from claims 7 and 18, respectively, similarly bring out the structure of the groove, and for the same reasons should be allowable.

Claims 7 and 18 now also bring out the retaining ring/device, and that it is rigid. This also differentiates over the O-rings of Mills and Sandford, which are believed to be resilient as they are used for sealing purposes. New claims 31 and 33 also bring out the structure of the retaining ring/device which further differentiates it from the O-rings of Mills and Sandford.

It is also noted that the dependent claims also bring out aspects of the present invention that are not shown or described in the cited art. Claims 15 and 26, for example, bring out that the retaining ring/device **engages and axially supports** one end of the support core. This is not shown in the cited references, as for example, they show O-rings located between radial surfaces of an outer end cap and an inner end cap segment (as, e.g., in Mills).

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims remaining in the application patently distinguish over the cited art and should be in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner continue to believe otherwise, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if the Examiner believes it would result in a furtherance of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



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